

Supporting Students to Read Really Difficult Expository Text

Judith Irvin

Florida State University

jjirvin@nationalliteracyproject.org

www.NationalLiteracyProject.org

What we Know about Text Structure

- ▶ Emphasis is on narrative texts in lower grades
- ▶ Knowledge of story structure helps readers comprehend and recall story information
- ▶ Beginning around grade 4 or 5, the emphasis shifts to expository text

Comprehension and Expository Text

- ▶ More difficult for students to comprehend – why??
 - Less familiar content
 - More complex and varied structures

Benefits of Understanding Expository Text Structure

- ▶ Allows students to
 - Construct accurate representations of information text
 - Identify important ideas
 - Predict forthcoming details
 - Summarize the text
 - Monitor their own comprehension

Five Expository Text Patterns

- ▶ Chronological/ sequence
- ▶ Description enumeration
- ▶ Compare/contrast
- ▶ Cause/effect
- ▶ Problem solution

Text Structure - Chronological/Sequence

- Used to inform readers about a topic by presenting information through events or steps in a chronological order using time.

Signal Words

First, second

Initially

Following

Preceding

next

then

when

after

not long after

before

finally

on (date)

Chronological/ Sequence



- First event

- Second event

- Third event

Text Structure - Chronological Sequence

- ▶ Read the paragraph
- ▶ Underline the signal words
- ▶ Create a graphic organizer
- ▶ Write a paragraph frame
 begins with ..., continues with ..., and ends with ...

Text Structure - Description/Enumeration

- Used to describe the attributes and features of people, places, or items

Signal Words

For instance

for example

also

Such as

in addition

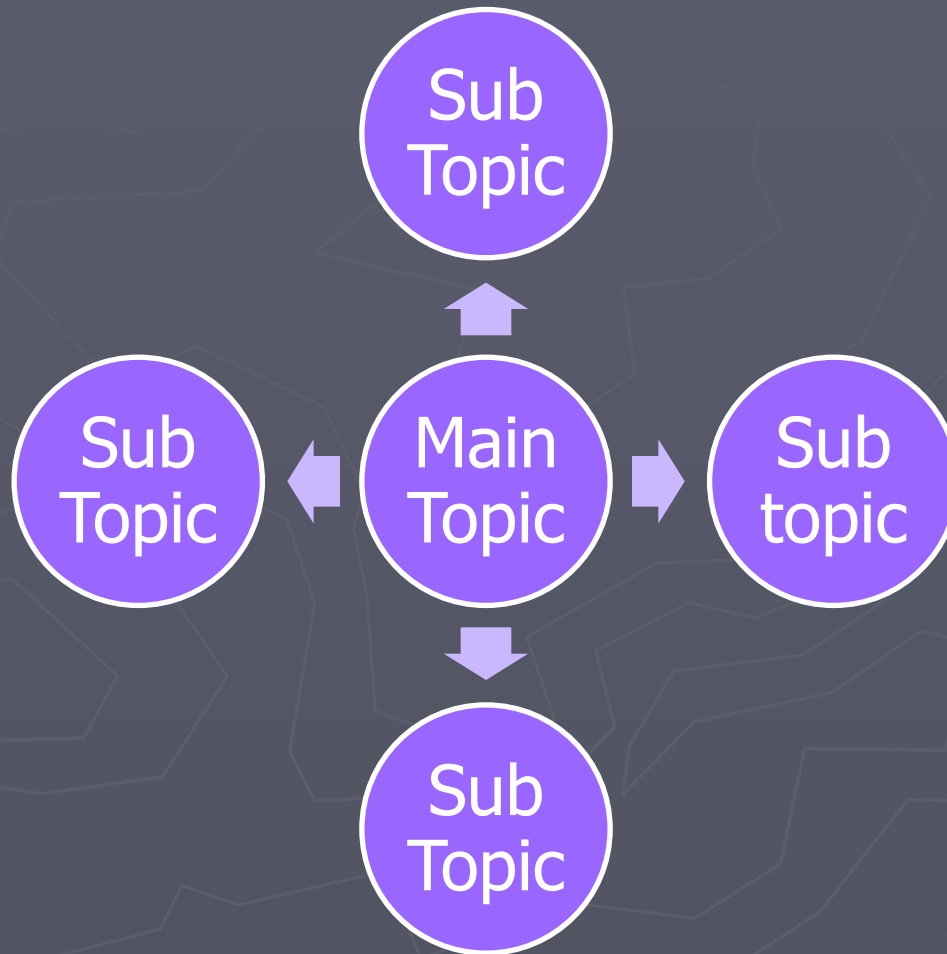
first

Another

furthermore

to illustrate

Description



Text Structure - Description

- ▶ Read the paragraph
- ▶ Underline the signal words
- ▶ Create a graphic organizer
- ▶ Write a paragraph frame

_____ is a kind of _____ that

Text Structure - Compare/Contrast

- Used to illustrate the differences or similarities of the items being compared

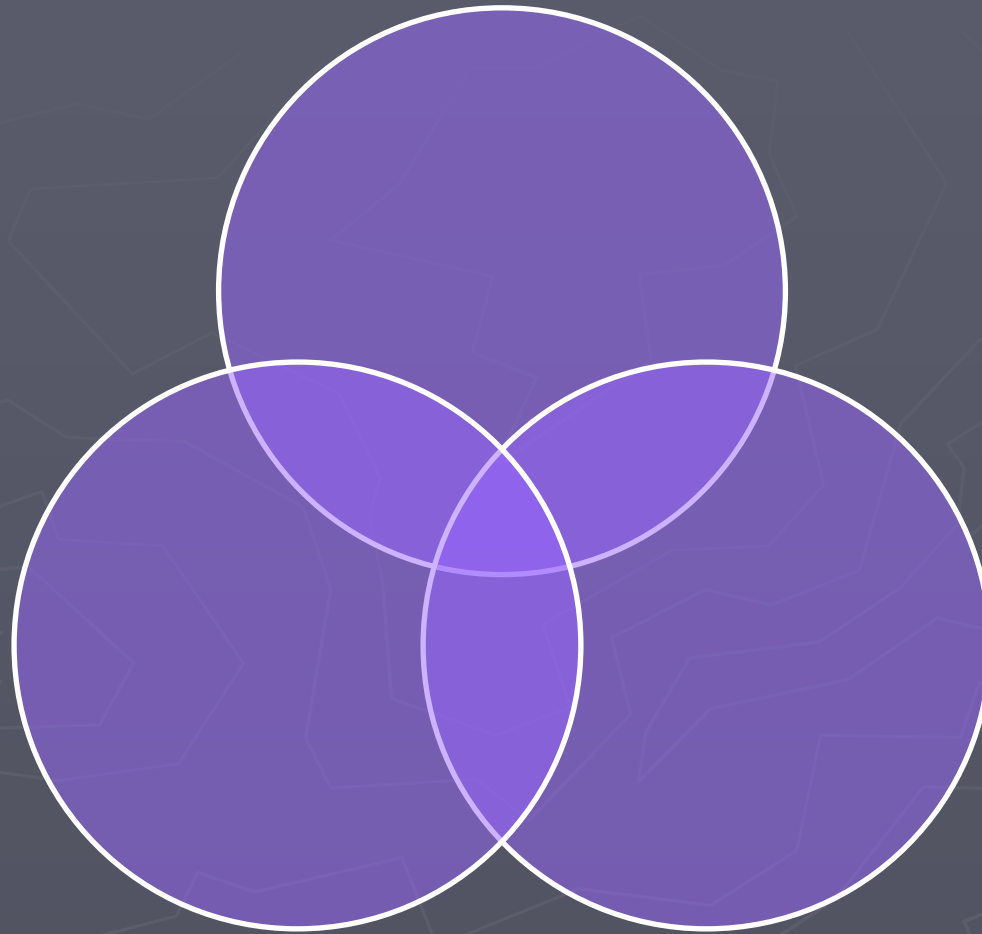
Signal Words

Different from
As opposed to
Compared with
Either..or

same as
instead of
however
unless

similar to
although
as well as
but

Compare/Contrast



Text Structure - Compare/Contrast

- ▶ Read the paragraph
- ▶ Underline the signal words
- ▶ Create a graphic organizer

- ▶ Write a paragraph frame

x and y are similar in that they are both ...,
but x ..., while y ...

Text Structure - Cause/Effect

- Used to show how the facts, events, or concepts result due to other facts, events, or concepts

Signal Words

Consequently

This led to...so

Accordingly

As a result of

For this reason

may be due to

nevertheless

because of

in order to

not only...but

since

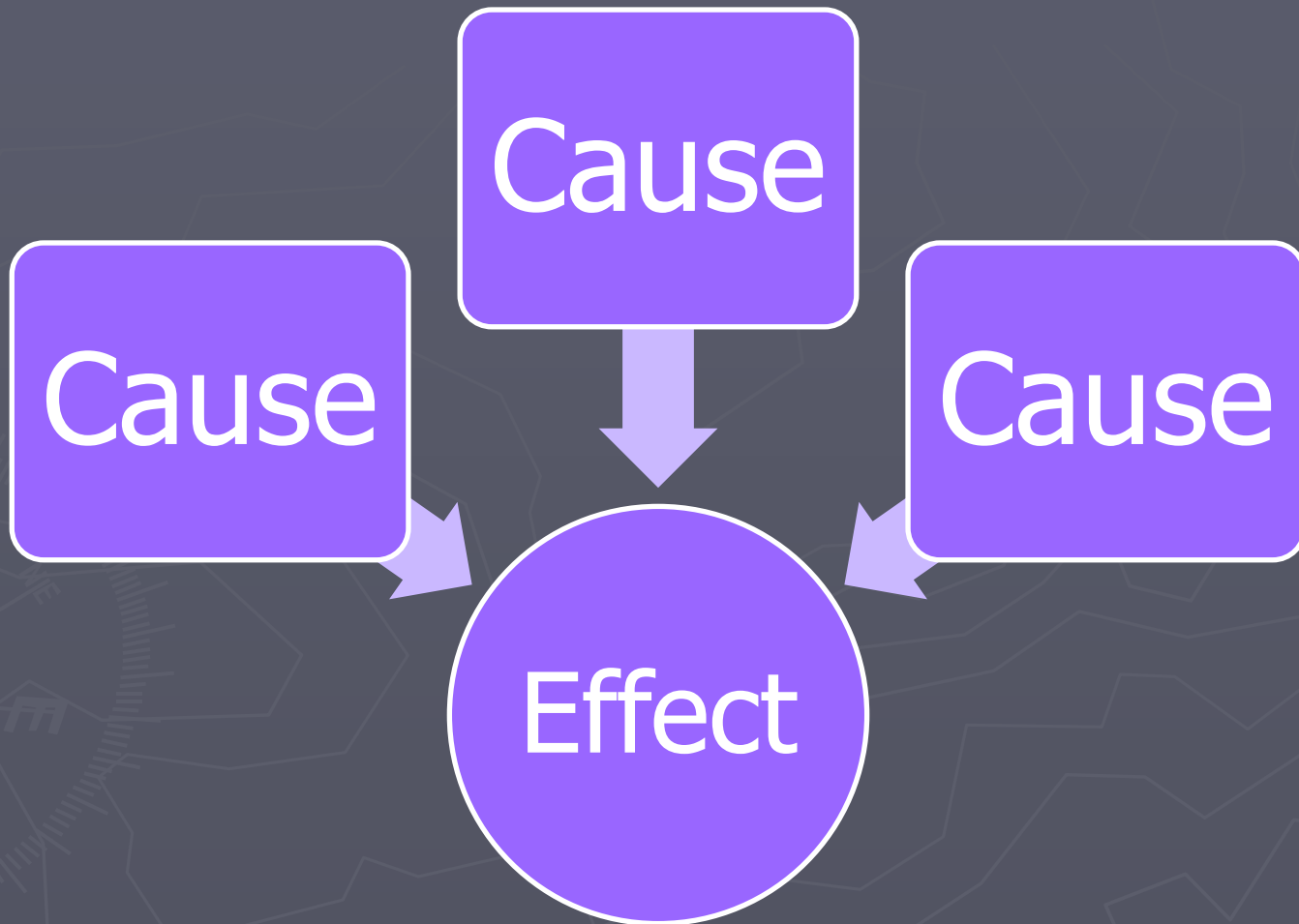
if...then

yet

also

because

Cause/Effect



Text Structure - Cause and Effect

- ▶ Read the paragraph
- ▶ Underline the signal words
- ▶ Create a graphic organizer

- ▶ Write a paragraph frame

_____ happens because ... or _____ causes

....

Text Structure - Problem/Solution

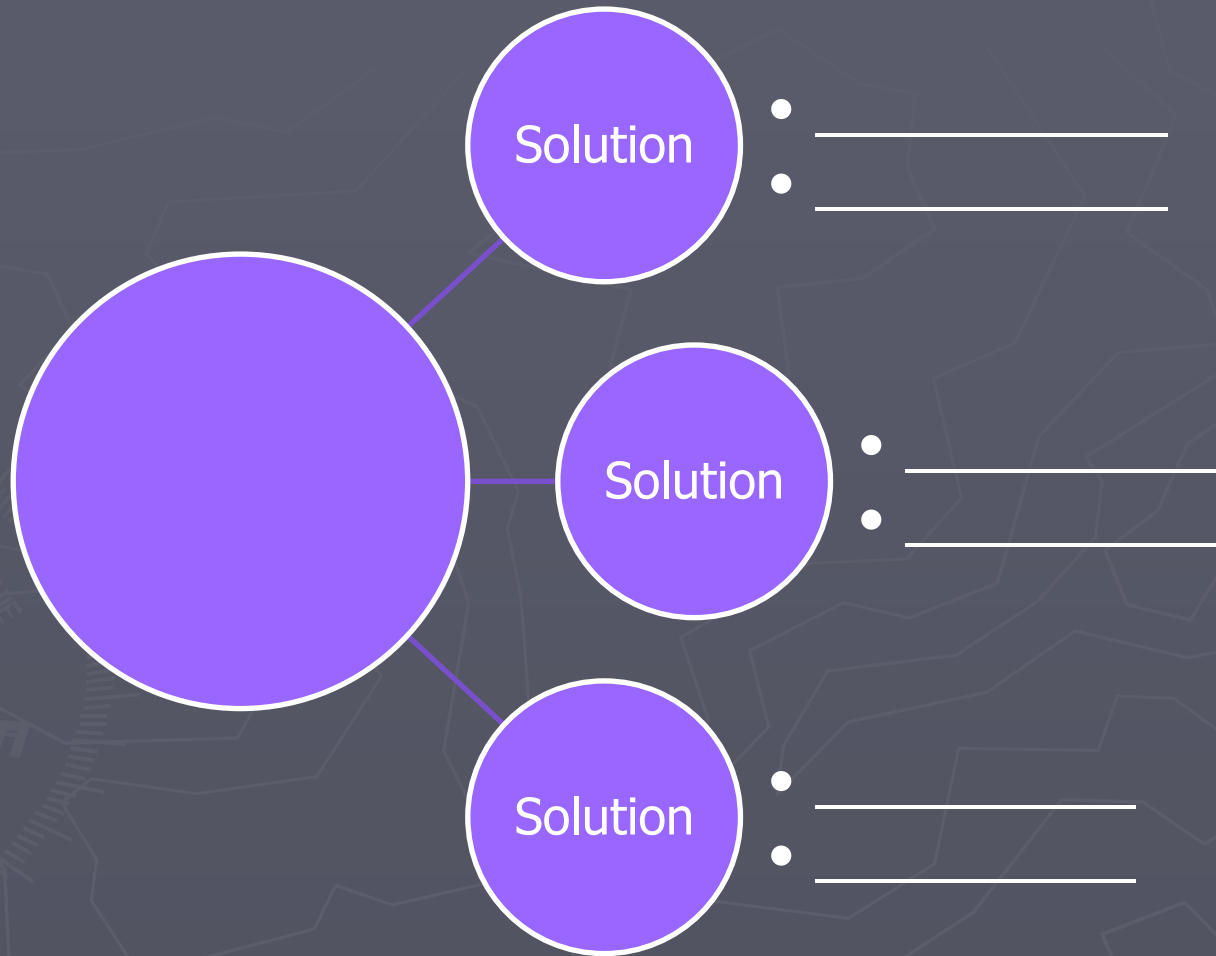
- Used to present a problem and possible solutions to this problem.

Signal Words

the problem is
a solution
therefore

the question is
one answer is
if....then

Problem/Solution



Text Structure - Problem/Solution

- ▶ Read the paragraph
- ▶ Underline the signal words
- ▶ Create a graphic organizer
- ▶ Write a paragraph frame
 wanted ..., but ..., so ...

One Sentence Summary Frames



Description	_____ is a kind of _____ that
Problem/Solution	_____ wanted ..., but ..., so ...
Sequence	_____ begins with ..., continues with ..., and ends with ...
Comparison/Contrast	x and y are similar in that they are both ..., but x ..., while y ...
Cause/Effect	_____ happens because ... or _____ causes

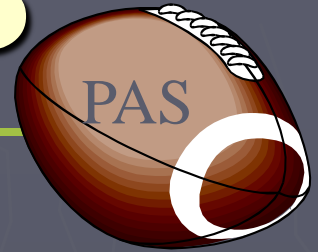
Paragraph Frame

_____ are different from _____ in
several ways. First of all, _____ while
_____. Secondly, _____
while _____. In addition, _____
while _____. So, it is evident that
_____.

Expository Materials

- ▶ Advertisements
- ▶ Announcements
- ▶ Brochures
- ▶ Book Jackets
- ▶ Editorials
- ▶ Essays
- ▶ Instructions
- ▶ Journals
- ▶ Newspaper Articles
- ▶ Magazine Articles
- ▶ Reports
- ▶ Songs
- ▶ Speeches
- ▶ Textbooks

Pre-Reading: PAS



Preview the Text and Critical Vocabulary

Access and build background Knowledge

Set the Purpose

Prereading Activities

- ▶ **Preview the text**
 - Text structure
 - Signal or transition words
- ▶ **Pre-teach critical vocabulary**
- ▶ **Access and build prior knowledge**
 - Make connections
- ▶ **Ask meaningful questions**
- ▶ **Set the purpose for reading**

Previewing

- ▶ **Examine headings and sub-headings**
- ▶ **Analyze the genre**
- ▶ **Examine bulleted lists**
- ▶ **Examine pictures, captions, charts, graphs, and illustrations**
- ▶ **Explicitly discuss expectations**